

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION

TEL: 880-2-883-7150-4

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: DhakaPA@state.gov

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



PRESS RELEASE

Bangladeshi Officers Assist in Relief Efforts from Kearsarge

By Lt. Nathan Christensen, CTF76 Public Affairs Officer

USS KEARSARGE, at Sea, December 4 – Since Nov. 24, nine Bangladeshi Military officers have helped conduct Humanitarian Assistance / Disaster Relief (HA/DR) operations ashore while serving aboard USS Kearsarge (LHD 3).

Bangladeshi officers embarked the ship to serve as liaisons between Kearsarge, relief groups and distribution centers based in Bangladesh.

“The Bangladesh liaison officers have been instrumental in carrying out the relief effort over the past eight days,” said Marine Capt. David Pope, a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter pilot from the embarked Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) 261. “They helped out tremendously by coordinating with Bangladeshi military forces on the ground to ensure the landing zones were clear.”

Kearsarge is currently operating in the Bay of Bengal as a sea-based logistical platform, delivering water and needed disaster relief supplies to the hardest-hit areas of Cyclone Sidr as determined by the government of Bangladesh.

“Having the U.S. Navy and Marines here (in Bangladesh) helps us feel very safe,” said Cmdr. Mohammad Fazle Rabbi of the Bangladeshi Navy. “It (Kearsarge) has made relief efforts much easier because the ship has transported supplies to areas much more quickly.”

To date, Kearsarge and the 22nd MEU have delivered 12, 434 gallons of water and 162,052 lbs. of food, blankets, clothing and other emergency supplies.

“Being aboard Kearsarge helps strengthen our diplomatic relationship with the United States,” said Rabbi. “Bangladesh is a cyclone-prone country. We saw one of the greatest humanitarian efforts from the U.S. (Operation Sea Angel) in 1991; this is another cyclone and many are once again benefiting from the U.S. help.”

Bangladeshi Army officers embarked aboard Kearsarge included Maj. Asif Iqbal, Maj. Rezwan, Maj. Khaondaker Lokman Hakim, Maj. Mohammad Abdul Wajed, Maj. Mohammad Faisal Hasan Khan, and Capt. Sharif Ahammad Rayhanul Karim. Additionally, Navy Cmdr. Mohammad Fazle Rabbi; Air Force Squadron Leader Salauddin Md Alim Al Rabbi and Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. M Masud Alam are serving on board the ship.

Kearsarge and the embarked 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit are conducting Humanitarian Assistance/ Disaster Relief efforts in response to the Government of Bangladesh’s request for assistance after Tropical Cyclone Sidr struck their Southern coast Nov. 15. The storm killed over 3,000 people and has left several hundred thousand homeless. The Department of Defense effort is part of a larger United States response coordinated by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development.

Kearsarge reported for duty to assist in Bangladeshi humanitarian relief efforts on Thanksgiving Day and began to transfer relief supplies ashore shortly thereafter.

Kearsarge is the flagship of the Kearsarge Strike Group.

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